

Staying fit helps beat the ‘winter blues’

Physical activity during the winter has many benefits

By Mildred Green

During the winter, as the days get shorter and colder, and many people may feel restless and have increased cravings for holiday sweets. Depression may even set in.

Experts agree that the cold winter months are usually when individuals lose interest in staying fit and indulge in those holiday desserts, which can quickly turn into extra pounds.

However, according to recent releases from the Mayo Clinic and Center for Disease Control, there are many reasons for staying fit during winter.

Increase your energy

Exercising during the cold winter months not only helps fights depression, but it also makes people feel better, increases energy and improves sleep, according to the Mayo Clinic release.

The clinic advises people to try to exercise 20 to 30 minutes a day, but emphasizes that this exercise does not have to be strenuous (and can even include cleaning house or even walking in the mall.)

“Whatever you choose,” said a Mayo Clinic specialist, “balance the four main types of exercise – endurance, strength, balance and flexibility.”

Reduce risks for illness

The Center for Disease Control reports that regular physical fitness can significantly improve the quality of one’s life – including reducing susceptibility to illness and lowering one’s odds of premature death.

The CDC reports that regular physical activity can provide an individual with a greater chance of avoiding the following illnesses:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Colon cancer.

Exercise also helps people control their weight and helps muscles, bones and joints remain healthy and strong.

“Resist the instinct to overeat and store up for winter, get plenty of natural sunlight and exercise regularly to stay fit and keep your metabolism renewed,” said Robin Vitetta-Miller, of shape.com.

Miller added that exercise is “crucial” to preventing unwanted winter weight gains.



Hugh C. McBride

A ski trip can allow the family, including the little ones, to partake in physical activity while having fun in the snow.

Stay fit without leaving post

Whether exercising indoors or outdoors this winter, there are a variety of places to go in the 6th Area Support Group.

In Stuttgart, fitness centers are located on Patch Barracks, Panzer Kaserne, Robinson Barracks and Kelley Barracks. In Garmisch, the Mueller Fitness Center is on Sheridan Kaserne.

In addition to weights and work-out machines, the centers offer several fitness classes and a knowledgeable and helpful staff.

Those who enjoy the outdoors can take advantage of the numerous walking and biking paths in the area. If skiing or snowboarding is more your speed, take advantage of the mountains nearby.

By focusing on the big picture and exercising through the winter, the Mayo Clinic believes people will have the ability to shed more of those extra holiday calories and also be in better shape when spring arrives.

Stuttgart Fitness Schedule

Monday

6 a.m., Step Extreme - Patch
9 a.m., Jazzercise - Patch
5:30 p.m., Kickboxing - Patch
6 a.m., Step Circuit - Kelley

Tuesday

11:30 a.m., Cardio/Sculpt - Patch
5:30 p.m., Yoga - Patch
6 p.m., Body Sculpting - Kelley

Wednesday

6 a.m., Kickboxing - Patch
9 a.m., Jazzercise - Patch
5:30 p.m., Kickboxing - Patch
6 p.m., Step Circuit - Kelley

Thursday

9 a.m., Body Sculpting - Patch
11:30 a.m., Kickboxing - Patch
5:30 p.m., Yoga - Patch
6 p.m., Step Circuit - Kelley

Friday

6 a.m., Cardio Sculpt - Patch
9 a.m., Jazzercise - Patch

Spinning classes pick up again in January. A belly dancing class will begin Dec. 3, 7 to 9 p.m. and a women’s self-defense class is scheduled to begin in January.

To learn how to work with equipment, develop an exercise program, or find a personal trainer, contact Patch Fitness Coordinator, Cory Doubek at 430-5386, 5424/civ.0711-680-5424.

For more about winter activities visit the Armed Forces Recreation Center-Europe Web site at www.afrc europe.com or call 440-2575/civ.08821-72981.

Garmisch Fitness Schedule

Burke Center

Monday

9 a.m., Yoga

Wednesday

5:45 p.m., Yoga

Mueller Fitness Center

Monday

5:30 p.m., Cardio boxing

Tuesday

5:30 p.m., Spin
6:45 p.m., Pilates

Wednesday

Noon Express Fit
12:30 p.m., Spin

Thursday

5:30 p.m., Body sculpting
5:30 p.m., Spin
6:45 p.m., Pilates